

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARAMA 00461 010959Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-07 DLOS-09 EB-08 COME-00 INT-05

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 IO-13 DODE-00 SIL-01 LAB-04

CG-00 DOTE-00 L-03 /075 W

-----074522 012120Z /65

R 311709Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4199

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 0461

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS PEPR PBOR NS GY

SUBJ: SURINAM AND GUYANA CONTINUE AT ODDS

1. SURINAM REMAINS VIGILANT IN PATROLLING WESTERN BORDER WITH GUYANA ALONG THE CORANTIJN RIVER TO INSURE THAT GUYANESEHARE NOT VIOLATING SURINAMESE CONTROLS IN THAT AREA. ISSUES INVOLVED INCLUDE LICENSES FOR GUYANESE TO FISHIN THE RIVER, PERMISSION FOR GUYANESE LABORERS TO WORK ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN WEST SURINAM, AND ILLEGAL ENTRY OF GUYANESE ALONG THE BORDER AREA. THE SURINAM ARMY AND POLICE ARE MONITORING ACTIVITIES IN THE BORDER REGION ALONG THE COAST, ON THE RIVER, AND IN THE INTERIOR OF SURINAM.

2. SEVERAL INCIDENTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN REPORTED INCLUDING THE ARREST OF A GUYANESE FISHING VESSEL AND FOUR CREW MEMBERS OFF SURINAM'S COAST DURING THE NIGHT OF MARCH 20-21 AND THE EXPULSION OF SIX GUYANESE BALATA WORKERS DISCOVERED IN THER INTERIOR AND ESCORTED BY THE SURINAM ARMY TO PARAMARIBO. LATTER INCIDENT GAVE RISE
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PAGE 02 PARAMA 00461 010959Z

TO PRESS SPECULATION THAT GUYANESE WERE IN FACT SPIES ALTHOUGH SURINAM'S SOLICITOR GENERAL WAS PREVIOUSLY QUOTED AS SAYING IT COULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED THAT THE SIX INVOLVED WERE ENGAGED IN MILITARY OR OTHER ACTIVITIES.

3. THE DISTRICT OFFICE IN NICKERIE HAS REPORTEDLY ALSO TOLD THE COMPANIES EXECUTING PROJECTS IN WEST SURINAM NOT

TO HIRE ANY GUYANESE LABORERS WITHOUT A WORKING PERMIT.
IT IS A WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT HUNDREDS OF GUYANESE

REGULARLY CROSS INTO SURINAM TO SEEK BOTH SHORT- AND LONG-
TERM EMPLOYMENT AT WAGES SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN THEY
COULD EARN AT HOME, AND SOME HIRING IS APPROVED BY GOS
AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER, ILLEGAL GUYANESE LABORERS PROVIDE
ONE MORE IRRITANT TO THE ALREADY AMPLY TROUBLED RELATION-
SHIP BETWEEN GEORGETOWN AND PARAMARIBO.

4. COMMENT: WE INCREASINGLY HEAR ASSERTIONS BY RESPONSIBLE
POLITICIANS THAT SURINAM AND GUYANA HAVE TO FIND SOME WAY
OF NORMALIZING RELATIONS, INCLUDING THE STATEMENT BY PRIME
MINISTER ARRON IN HIS NEW GOVERNMENT'S POLICY DECLARATION
THAT BORDER AND FISHING TALKS WITH GUYANA ARE ON THE
AGENDA. GUYANA'S FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER WILLS TRIED TO
GET SOMETHING STARTED AND CAME CLOSE TO SUCCEEDING,
BUT SINCE HIS DEPARTURE FROM OFFICE IN FEBRUARY NO FURTHER
PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE
POLITICAL WILL TO ACHIEVE A RAPPROCHMENT WILL TRIUMPH
OVER THE CONTINUING STRAINS AND AGGRAVATIONS WHICH CURRENTLY
DOMINATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. BUT
WE AT LEAST SEE NO IMMEDIATE PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATIONS.
ZURHELLEN

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Message Attributes

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